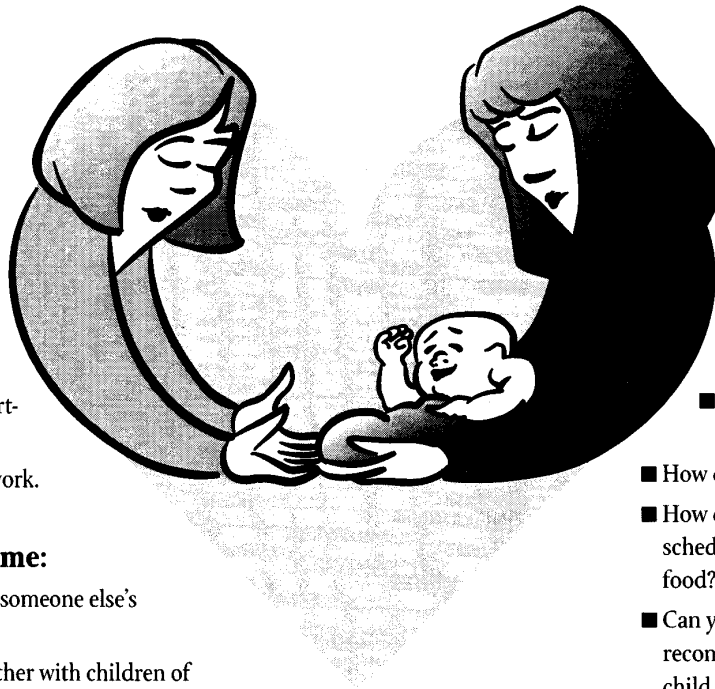




# Choosing a Child Care Provider

Choosing child care is one of the biggest budgeting and emotional choices you'll have to make as a parent. Choosing the right setting for your child and your budget takes planning. Don't be afraid to visit many different day care sites, talk to friends and coworkers and contact your local child care council or licensing agency (listings are in your local telephone directory) for recommendations. Whatever setting you choose, it's important that you're comfortable communicating with your child care provider. Follow your instincts; if something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't right for you.



## A nanny or au pair:

- looks after your child in your home.
- may live in or out of your home.
- may work full- or part-time.
- may do light housework.

## A family care home:

- provides day care in someone else's home.
- is often run by a mother with children of her own.
- if licensed, is required to meet strict safety standards and limit the number of children.
- if not licensed, may be lacking in safety standards and supervision.

## An institutional/group child care center:

- must be licensed by the state.
- usually has more children in it than a family home setting.
- has a regulated adult-per-child ratio.

## Questions to Ask Child Care Providers

- What experience do you have in providing care?
- What do you do if a baby cries?
- How do you discipline a child?
- How do you handle feeding schedules, meals and choices of food?
- Can you provide a written recommendation from your last child care job or from other clients?
- How long, on average, do children remain in your care?
- Can I call my child?

### ESTIMATED COSTS PER YEAR

Child Care Options	Your Cost
■ staying at home	loss of income <i>(minus the cost of working; transportation, dry cleaning, etc.)</i>
■ nanny/au pair	up to \$25,000
■ family care home	\$4,000–\$6,000
■ group child care center	up to \$8,000